

Escherichia Coli (E. Coli)

Escherichia coli (E. coli) can cause an infection of the intestines. These bacteria are found in the digestive tract of some beef and dairy cattle, where they can get into milk or into meat during the slaughtering process. In humans, the bacteria produce a toxin that can cause diarrhea.

CAUSE: E. coli 0157:H7 bacteria

SYMPTOMS: Some people infected with E. coli have no symptoms at all. Others can be ill with watery or severe bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and a low-grade fever.

TRANSMISSION: By eating contaminated food (especially ground beef that is not thoroughly cooked) or by drinking unpasteurized milk or unpasteurized apple cider. These bacteria can also spread from person to person, especially from children in diapers. Spread can also occur when a person does not wash his/her hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.

INCUBATION: It takes from 2 to 10 days, usually about 3 to 4 days, from the time a person is exposed until symptoms develop.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD: The bacteria can be found in the stool for about one week, possible as long as 3 weeks, after symptoms start.



Until diarrhea has stopped and 2 stool cultures, at least 1 day apart, are negative.



REPORTABLE


PROVIDER: This disease is reportable to the health department. In Hall, Hamilton, or Merrick County call (308) 385-5175. Outside counties call your local or state health department

SCHOOL/CHILD CARE FACILITY: Report all confirmed cases or suspected cases.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS: Inform your child care provider if your child has this illness.

Prevention & Control

1. Thoroughly cook all hamburger or ground beef until it is brown, not pink inside. Heat kills the bacteria. Do not drink unpasteurized milk or unpasteurized apple cider.
2. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water for at least 20 seconds after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of infectious disease found in the intestinal tract. Parent/guardians and child care providers should closely monitor hand washing of all children after bathroom use or diapering. If hand sanitizers are used, they may be used only after thorough hand washing.
3. Clean and disinfect contaminated areas (diapering area, toilets, and training-toilets) and sanitize toys at least daily and when soiled.



1. Bleach Disinfectant


- ¼ cup bleach in a gallon of water
- 1 tablespoon bleach in a quart of water

PREPARE FRESH SOLUTION DAILY.

OR

2. Commercial disinfectant that is EPA approved

FOLLOW MANUFACTURER'S DIRECTIONS.



1. Bleach Sanitizer (Use non-scented)

- 1 teaspoon bleach in 1 gallon water
- ¼ teaspoon bleach in 1 quart water

USE TEST STRIP TO CHECK CONCENTRATION.

DO NOT RINSE, LET AIR DRY.

PREPARE FRESH SOLUTION DAILY.

OR

2. Commercial or food grade sanitizer that is EPA approved

FOLLOW MANUFACTURER'S DIRECTIONS.

4. Diagnosis/Treatment: There is a lab test to look for E. coli in the stool. Diarrhea caused by E. coli usually goes away after a few days without any treatment. Antibiotics and medications to stop diarrhea are usually not recommended. Check with your doctor before taking any over-the-counter medications.

For more information, you or your physician may call the Central District Health Department at 385-5175, or your local health department.